

Walthamstow a mere formality to Wycombe

By MIKE WHITESMAN: Wycombe Wanderers 4, Walthamstow Avenue 1

WYCOMBE treated the final home commitment of their Isthmian League programme as little more than a formality. But against a half-paced, half-hearted Walthamstow effort, that is exactly what Saturday's game at Loakes Park became.

Former Leytonstone team boss, Freddie Mann, saw nothing that could have impressed him about his new charges, as they welcomed him to the Avenue's 'set-up' in meagre style.

Wanderers pulled away only in the second half however, no doubt after a few well chosen words from coach, Brian Lee, at half-time, had jerked them out of their own coma.

A re-arranged defensive personnel, necessitated by an injury to regular full back, Charlie Gale, coped efficiently, Keith Stevenson staking a particularly strong claim to his place in next season's 'pool'.

Indeed, on view was probably the major nucleus of the new streamlined Wanderers playing staff for 1969-70.

And reasonably promising it looked too. Once they shook off their end of season outlook, the 'Blues' let rip, casting their visitors three goals adrift and setting themselves up for a final 20 minute onslaught on the Avenue 'area'.

A comparatively small crowd grew impatient with the docile manoeuvring that dogged a rain-soaked opening 20 minute spell. Then, suddenly the storm passed over, and for a few precious moments, both teams crawled out of 'cover' with a goal apiece inside the next 120 seconds.

For Walthamstow, Paul Hopwood, caught the home defence napping in the 21st minute, but

it was Wycombe's 40th wink. For a minute later, they awoke and Tony Horseman's foot caught the ball a split second before Parson could reach it, edging in an equaliser.

Alas, the game 'recovered' from its momentary rush of blood, and not until the second half, did Walthamstow pay for their almost lazy approach.

The goal that started their pennance was netted in typical Horseman fashion, the inside-striker swivelling and shooting in one action from ten yards out after 51 minutes.

Five minutes, and several near misses later, Keith Samuels, turned up to score such an opportunist goal, that all his previous misdeeds for the day, were instantly erased from the memory.

Working a way inside off the right flank, the Wycombe attack moved in in force, Horseman bringing down the ball with his foot to set his skipper up for a brilliant back-kick.

In a rare moment of bravado, Avenue tried to strike back and had the ball going inches the upper side of the home crossbar twice in quick succession.

But 18 minutes from time, up popped Samuels again to drive in off a post from 25 yards, finishing off an attack centred round the other half of Wycombe's forward combine, Horseman.

Making a tactical substitution, Hansell for Mick Janes, Walthamstow introduced their number 12, to the full fury of Wanderers' attack.

So concerted did the barrage on Parson's goal become that even Lou Temel marched upfield for a couple of hellraising shots.